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THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

VOL. XX. No. 11

THE BEACON PRESS, INC., BOSTON, MASS.

DECEMBER 15, 1929



The Little Pine Peddler

By May Justus

Chapter Three

"HEY, there! Hey, there!"

Johnny McAsher awoke next morning to hear Uncle Zebbie calling on the outside. He sat up in his bed and blinked at the newly kindled flame on the hearth, and saw that his mammy was stirring up some breakfast. Now she went to the door and invited their neighbor inside.

Johnny sprang up in an instant and hurried into his clothes. After that he managed to swallow a few bites of breakfast. His mammy heated two big rocks and put them in the wagon.

"They will keep you from getting too cold as you ride down the Hollow," she told him. "You can keep your feet on the rocks and warm them for many hours. After the sun is up, you will not need them."

The wagon was piled high with wood, and in the back were the pine knots. Johnny and Uncle Zebbie sat up in front.

"Good luck to you!" said the widow as she watched them drive away.

"I'll bring you something back from

town, if I sell any pine," Johnny shouted back.

Now they were really off. Uncle Zebbie shouted at the oxen, and talked in between shouts to Johnny.

"We will sell our wood and pine first," the old man said. "After that, we will walk around and see the town."

All the way to the valley he had to tell Johnny over and over just how everything would look, and although he described things as well as he could, the little boy was completely surprised when he got his first glimpse of the real town. They had just crossed over a bridge, and rounded a curve, when the first store came into view. It was two stories high, and the building was painted white. Johnny caught his breath and clutched Uncle Zebbie's arm.

"You didn't tell me about any place like that!" he cried. "Oh, Uncle Zebbie! isn't it beautiful?"

The next house was a dwelling, and Uncle Zebbie stopped in front of it.

"This is where one of my customers lives," he explained to the boy. "Get down and go along with me, so that you will learn what to do."

They went around to the back door and knocked. A good-natured-looking woman opened to them.

"Would you like some wood today?" asked Uncle Zebbie politely.

"No wood," the woman told him, "but I'd like some good rich pine."

"I will send the boy back with it," said Uncle Zebbie.

They went back to the wagon and he gave Johnny an armful of the pine kindling.

"All you need to do is to take the money and thank her," the old man said.

Johnny took the pine and ran around to the

door. The friendly woman had the money in her hand, and she had something else, too.

"I thought you might be hungry, coming such a long way," she told him, filling his hands with little brown cookies. "These are some fresh ones that I baked this morning."

"Thank you—thank you!" said Johnny, trying to keep the money and the cookies from spilling.

"You are welcome," said the woman, "and when you come back to town, come and see me. I may not buy pine every time, but I always have cookies."

"Thank you," said Johnny again, and he ran back to the wagon.

"Here!" he cried to Uncle Zebbie, and he showed him the money and the cakes.

Uncle Zebbie took out a little old black purse and put the money in it. "It will not get lost in here," he said, "and later on we'll divide it."

Now they went to another place farther down the street. This time when the wagon stopped, Uncle Zebbie let Johnny go alone.

"You know what to say to people now,"



"Beautiful brown shoes they were, as smooth and shiny as a buckeye."

he said, "and I want you to learn to peddle."

Johnny couldn't help feeling a little bit shaky to find himself going all alone up to the big house, but he mustered up all the courage that he had, and marched to the door.

"Would you like some wood today?" he asked the man who opened the door to him.

"Yes," said the man, "a whole wagon load, if you have it. I think it is going to snow very soon, and I want to have a good fire."

"I will send Uncle Zebbie around with it," said Johnny in a business-like way, and he dashed off to the wagon.

"I've sold the wood, the whole wagon load of it!" he shouted.

"You are a good little peddler," said Uncle Zebbie, and he drove the wagon to the back.

After the wood was unloaded and Uncle Zebbie was paid, they drove on into town to sell the rest of the kindling. Some of this they sold at the stores without any trouble at all, for nearly everybody wanted some to start their fires in the morning. But there was still a good bit of it, and Uncle Zebbie left Johnny in the wagon while he went off to find a purchaser. While he was gone, a man came up and looked into the wagon.

"That is fine kindling pine you have," he said. "How much do you ask for it?"

"A dime for two or three pieces, I think," said Johnny a little uncertainly.

"And what will you do with the dimes you get?" asked the man.

"I might get me a pair of shoes, if there were enough," Johnny replied.

The man felt in his pocket and brought out a large silver piece. "I would like a bit of your kindling, I think," he said with a smile, "but I haven't any dimes in my pocket. I thought of giving you this instead," and he held up the piece of silver, "but perhaps you would just as soon let me pay you a pair of good new shoes."

"Is there—is there enough pine to pay you?" asked Johnny eagerly.

"As much as I want," said the other. "Come on and we'll get the shoes."

Into a store they went and Johnny was placed in a chair. The man had the store-keeper bring first one and then another pair of shoes. At last a pair was found to fit, and they were indeed very fine. Beautiful, brown shoes they were, as smooth and shiny as a buckeye. Johnny McAsher had never dreamed of having such shoes as these. After they were laced and tied, the man took him back to the wagon.

"I will buy more pine from you some day," his new friend told him. Then he gathered up some pieces and tucked them under his arm.

"Take a lot of it with you," urged Johnny, but the man shook his head and laughed.

"I want to buy some more before long," he said with a twinkle in his eye. Then he said good-bye, and went off down the street.

In a few minutes more Uncle Zebbie was back. "I have sold the rest of the kindling to a hotel," he said, and then he saw Johnny's shoes.

"How—where—?" he began, and Johnny had to tell him.

"You're lucky today, all right," he said, "in fact you're a lucky person. I think that having you along brings me luck, too. I have never had an easier time selling wood than today."

After the wood was all sold they walked around the town. Johnny got to see the stores and all the sights of the town. Uncle Zebbie divided the money for the pine knots, and with some of this, Johnny bought some bread and cheese to eat for his dinner.

"I want to take something home to mammy," he said, "and I wonder what she would like."

"You had better take her the money," Uncle Zebbie said. "Then she can spend it for whatever she wants herself."

It was in the afternoon before they started back. The autumn days closed early now, and already it was growing

chilly. Johnny's feet were warm enough in their new shoes, but his hands were a little cold, and he had to stick them into his pockets to warm. As he put his left hand into his pocket he discovered something.

"Look, Uncle Zebbie!" he cried. "The strange man must have dropped this." And he held up a shining silver dollar.

"I guess he dropped it on purpose then," Uncle Zebbie laughed. "Well, you are a lucky boy. It isn't every pine peddler who has such luck on his very first day out."

"I will give the dollar to mammy!" said Johnny with a sudden thought. "She was wishing for a dollar only the other day."

The oxen were going up the Hollow now, and the wind came down the mountain. Johnny hummed the song that he had learned in school.

"It will snow tonight," said Uncle Zebbie, "for the wind is right. The pine we sold in the valley today will make good fires in the morning, and folks who have good fires are not afraid of snow."

"And folks who have new shoes don't care for the snow at all," added Johnny McAsher, looking at his own.

An Iceland Party

By M. Louise C. Hastings

"MY teacher is going to Iceland next year!" announced Arthur one morning at breakfast.

"Iceland!" shivered Nancy. "Oh-ooo! I shouldn't want to go. It's freezing there—all ice and snow! Aren't all the people Eskimos, Mother?"

"That is a place that I know little about," replied Mother, "but I'll tell you what we'll do. On Saturday evening we'll have an Iceland Party!"

"What's that?" asked Arthur.

"Each one of us will find out all we can about Iceland," replied his mother. "Get pictures, read your geographies, look up books in the library, and then we'll talk about Iceland at our party."

"Who's coming?" asked Nancy, who always expected guests at parties.

"Somebody," replied Mother, with shining eyes. "That's a secret!"

Saturday evening came. Father had brought the cast-off Christmas tree into the living-room, and Mother had decorated it with white tissue packing-paper to make it look snow-covered. Around the room were hung photographs and clipped pictures of Icelandic scenes, and then sheets were spread over the chairs and sofa, to represent snow. No one was allowed to enter the room.

"Who's ringing the doorbell?" asked Arthur.

"Suppose you and Nancy answer the bell," suggested Father.

They did, and there stood a very smil-

ing secret! It was Arthur's teacher who walked in! "Oh!" exclaimed Nancy. "So you're the secret."

"Part of it," laughingly replied the teacher. "What do you think of it?"

"We like it," replied Nancy promptly.

"Now bring your papers and pictures and come into the living-room," said Mother, leading the way.

"Oh! Oh!" exclaimed the children as the opened door revealed the white sheets. "Didn't I tell you Iceland was a land of ice and snow?" asked Nancy delightedly.

"First of all," began Mother, "we'll take a walk through the streets of Reykjavik, the capital of the Saga Land. The pictures will surprise you children as they did me, for I found that it was not extremely cold there. The winters average around freezing, and the summers are somewhat temperate. The masses of ice that drift down from the polar regions make the summers cool."

"What are the sheets for, Mother?" asked Arthur.

"Those are ice-fields," replied Mother, laughingly. "Iceland has many of them, but it is not a bleak, barren country for all that."

"Now, Nancy," spoke up Father, as they sat down, "as you are the youngest at this party, suppose you begin to tell us what you know about the country."

"I went to my geography," replied Nancy, delighted to be asked first for information. "I found that one point of Iceland crosses the Arctic Circle. It is a good deal larger than I thought, for it looks small on the map. It is larger

than Ireland. Now it's Arthur's turn. That's all I know."

Arthur, who was a little older, began to talk as if he were reciting in school. "Iceland has many wonders. It has glaciers like those in Switzerland, and the midnight sun as it is in Norway, and, besides, there are volcanoes and geysers, and one of the largest waterfalls in the world. It seems to be a great place," he added, turning to his teacher. "I wish I could go with you!"

"I wish you could, Arthur," replied Miss Allen. Then turning to Arthur's mother, she asked, "May I speak next?"

"Yes, you are next on the programme," was the reply.

Miss Allen untied a box which she had brought, and took out two dolls dressed in native costumes. One was in ordinary dress with a full blue skirt, a white waist, a colored apron, and a bright ribbon around her neck. "Her name is Sigga," said Miss Allen. On her head was a black cap with a long tassel. The other doll was dressed in flowing white muslin with a long plush cape trimmed with white canton flannel marked with black crayon to imitate ermine. Her name was "Guthrun."

"Aren't they cute!" exclaimed Nancy. "Are those the costumes you expect to see?"

"Yes," replied Miss Allen, "but the children dress much as you do. They have a long summer, and are out of doors most of the time just as you are. Iceland has many ponies. Everybody rides, children and all. In the country there are few schools, but the parents teach the children at home, and then there are traveling teachers who go from farm to farm. That is what I plan to do. Everybody learns to read. Children go to school in Reykjavik when they are older, and if they go to college they are sent to Copenhagen, Denmark.

"Next year, you know, there is to be a grand celebration in Iceland. Several thousand visitors will see the ceremonies that will commemorate the thousandth anniversary of its Parliament. It is the oldest existing Parliament in the world, and was convened in 930 by people who came from Norway to form a republic for individual rights and liberty. Those early sea lords, or Vikings, framed some of the laws which we enjoy today."

"I read that Iceland has many newspapers," said Father, "and that books are published each year."

"Not much like Eskimos, is it, Arthur?" said Mother.

"Now we will play a game," said Father. "Here are some white paper animals and birds all cut up into small pieces. Match them together, paste them on this black cardboard, and hang around the room. They represent those found in Iceland."

Such fun as they had! When the pictures were all hung up there were ponies,

cows, sheep, Icelandic dogs, cats, seals, Arctic foxes, ravens, eagles, wild swans, ptarmigans, golden plovers, gulls, terns, and the curlew, a little bird the Icelanders call *spoi*.

Mother then served hot chocolate with a variety of little cakes as they do in Iceland. The spoons were in a blanket which had been silvered over. After that, coffee was served, but Arthur and Nancy did not drink any, even though Icelandic children might have done so.

"This has been a delightful party," said Miss Allen, as she left.

"I shall tell the Icelandic children all about you, and I'll write you long letters. I shall remember this happy evening!"

"We have all learned a good deal about Iceland," laughed Mother.



The Black-Capped Chickadee

By ALVIN M. PETERSON

The chickadee is one of the easiest of all birds to know. Though he is a tiny mite of a bird, being only about five inches long, he is a brave fellow, fearing the snow, cold weather, and human beings but little. Usually you can get quite near him, whether he is hunting for insects about the trees of your yard, or looking for food about the trees of some far-off lonely wood, and can see that he wears a neat black cap on the top of his head. He also has a black patch on the throat, which reminds one of a black bow tie or a bib.

The chickadee is easy to identify for another reason. His most common note is his cheerful "chick-a-dee-dee." When angry, he scolds with "chick-a-dee-dee" notes, and when he is happy, he expresses his happiness in the same way. Sometimes he only says "dee-dee" or "dee-dee-dee." The chickadee, then, was named from his most common note, and he never says "chick-a-dee-dee" without telling you plainly what his name is. The chickadee, also, has a very pleasant song which one frequently hears. This song is a loud, clear, whistled "fee-bee fee-bee." But the chickadee's "fee-bee" song should not be confused with the "fee-bee" song of the phoebe. The two songs are a good deal alike. Still, after you have listened to the two birds sing, you should be able to discover a difference in their songs. The chickadee's song is clearer and more musical than phoebe's song.

The chickadee is a winter bird, because

it stays with us all winter long. It lives comfortably, because it is able to find insects and other pests about the leaves, trunks and branches of trees. It has sharp eyes and a small but sharp bill by means of which it is able to take insects and their eggs from tiny nooks and corners about the bark, trunks, twigs and branches of trees.

It is easy to have chickadees for winter bird neighbors. This bird lives on animal foods—on insects, as we have seen. Consequently, we should offer it animal foods. About the best and easiest food to offer it is beef suet. A large piece, weighing two or three pounds, can be procured at a butcher shop for a few cents. Pieces of this as large as a walnut may be tied to the trunks and branches of trees. Or, if you have a food tray, the suet may be ground or shaved from the piece and spread on the tray. Or you can fasten a suet stick to the tray and tie the suet to that. Take a long piece of string and wind it around and around the stick and the suet until the food is held securely in place with a network of string. The chickadee, then, will come and eat suet whenever he is hungry. But though this little bird eats suet mainly, he also will eat some oatmeal.

The chickadee nests in holes and cavities in tree-trunks, branches, stubs and stumps, very often quite near the ground. The nest is warm and comfortable, since it is made from fibres, bits of bark, moss, feathers, and other soft materials. The eggs are white in color but are spotted with reddish-brown. From five or six to ten and even twelve eggs are laid in each nest.

Naturally, birds that live on insects, their eggs and young all year long are very useful birds. A pair of these birds must feed thousands of insect pests to their young—many of them tiny pests we find it hard to see. They are among the best of all our feathered tree guardians, since it is from trees that they procure most of their food.

Our Little Bird Friends

By ESTELLE A. BROOKS

The bugs have all crawled deep in the ground

As all little bugs should do,

So the dear little birds who ate those bugs

Are depending on me and you.

There on my window sill chirping they sit,

A-begging for crumbs of bread,

Now do not forget to scatter them round

So our little bird friends are fed.

When Spring returns and the flowers sway

The little birds'll be there,

A-singing so gaily from bush and tree

And thanking us for our care.

THE BEACON CLUB

The Editor's Post Box

Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

5 BOARDMAN ST.,
WESTBORO, MASS.

Dear Editor: I read *The Beacon* every Sunday. I would like to become a member of the Beacon Club and wear its pin. I am twelve years old and go to the Unitarian Sunday School.

Sincerely yours,

CHARLES PUTNAM.

40 LAUREL AVE.,
WELLESLEY HILLS, MASS.

Dear Editor: I wish I could belong to the Beacon Club. May I please have a Beacon pin? Sometimes my father reads *The Beacon* to me after dinner on Sunday. I go to the Unitarian Sunday School. I have different teachers almost every time, but I am in Mrs. Dove's Sunday school. The minister is Mr. Swisher.

Love, from

BURT NICHOLS.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

90 WILLOW CT.,
DORCHESTER, MASS.

Dear Editor: I would like to become a member of the Beacon Club. I am thirteen years old and am in the first year of High School. My minister's name is Rev. William Lundell and my Sunday-school teacher is Mrs. Kempster. I like the "Puzzlers" very much so I am sending you some twisted names of boys and girls.

Sincerely yours,

MARGARET FORD.

BARNEVELD, N. Y.

Dear Editor: I go to the Unitarian Church and my minister's name is Mr. Taylor. I do reading and coloring in my Sunday school. My teacher's name is Mrs. Moore.

Very truly yours,

CLYDE MCCARTNEY.

Puzzlers

Charades of Amity

I.

My *first* is someone we well know,
But not an enemy or foe.

My *second*, "salts" and "tars" command;
'Tis out of place upon the land.

My *whole*, as we shall clearly see,
Expresses human amity.

II.

My *first* upon a face is found
And day or night it turns around.

My *next*, if we behead, will be
A fish within a salted sea.

My *whole*, a strong or weaker clasp,
Possesses kind and friendly grasp.

C. N. H.

Hidden Trees

1. Did you know that Will owns a horse?
2. This pin equals an iron bar in strength.
3. We heard the croak of a raven.
4. Steam engines propel many boats.
5. It appeared to me that he was false.
6. Philip, each one of your sums is wrong.
7. The plumes of Crecy round him waved.

E. F. B.

Answers to Puzzlers in No. 9

Hidden Books of the Bible.—1. Esther. 2. Job. 3. Genesis. 4. Exodus. 5. Ruth. 6. Titus.

Twisted Bible Names.—1. Lot. 2. Abraham. 3. Jesus. 4. Eve. 5. Abel. 6. Moses. 7. Adam. 8. Cain. 9. Noah. 10. Solomon.

Charade.—Stonewall (Jackson).

Book Notes

By ELSIE LUSTIG

THE CHARM STRING, by Albion Fellows Bacon, contains twelve stories for boys and girls of all ages. These are the tales that three little sisters used to tell each other every night. The eldest sister when she grew up wrote many popular books, the best known being the "Little Colonel Series." The youngest sister when she grew up collected all the stories they used to tell to each other. Her name is Albion Fellows Bacon, and she is the author of this book. I think the one I like best is called "More About the Gingerbread Boy." The old man and the old woman baked first a gingerbread boy, then a gingerbread girl. As time went on these children did not grow and the old people wanted them to get bigger and stronger in order that they might care for their foster parents. Finally through a charm, the gingerbread boy and girl were turned into real children. They were jolly companions and had great fun with their father and mother.

THE LAND OF THE LITTLE COLONEL, by Annie Fellows Johnston, will certainly interest those of you who have read the "Little Colonel Series." It is the story of the author's life and tells the real names of many of the places mentioned

in her books. This book is good for older girls and boys; it is really a grown-up biography, but I am sure many of you will like it. Here you will see pictures of the little Colonel and Mom Beck, and learn that many of the adventures of Mary Ware were true experiences of Mrs. Johnston.

CARMELLA COMMANDS, by Walter S. Ball, won the \$2,000 Harper American Girl prize contest. This is the story of fourteen-year-old Carmella, daughter of Italian peasants and child of the Italian quarter of an American city. Her parents do not speak English, so Carmella has to act as interpreter. She has many exciting adventures, particularly when she acts as her father's assistant in a real estate deal. At the end of the book her mother and father have learned the language of their new country, and Carmella is happy to find that she has helped not only her parents but other people to learn the value of Americanization.

THE CHARM STRING, by Albion Fellows Bacon. L. C. Page Co., Boston. \$2.00.

THE LAND OF THE LITTLE COLONEL, by Annie Fellows Johnston. L. C. Page Co., Boston. \$2.50.

CARMELLA COMMANDS, by Walter S. Ball. Harper Brothers, New York. \$2.00.

THE BEACON is published weekly from the first Sunday of October to the first Sunday of June, by THE BEACON PRESS, INC., 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. Distributed also at 285 Madison Ave., New York City; 105 S. Dearborn St., Chicago; 2416 Allston Way, Berkeley, Calif.

Single subscription, 60 cents.

School subscription, 50 cents.

Entered at the Boston Post-Office as second-class matter. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on September 13, 1913.

Printed in U. S. A.